

Perinatal HIV transmission is the most common route of HIV infection in children and is now the source of almost all AIDS cases in children in the United States. Perinatal transmission happens when the virus is transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or during breastfeeding (CDC, 2007). For reporting purposes, patients known to be HIV positive before 13 years of age are classified as pediatric HIV cases.

In the 40 states and 5 US-dependent areas with established name-based reporting, 37% of children diagnosed with HIV infection between 2006 and 2009 were diagnosed within the first six months of birth and 42% were diagnosed within the first year (CDC, 2011). Since 1994, testing of pregnant women and treatment with zidovudine have greatly reduced the risk of perinatal transmission and the numbers of children perinatally infected with HIV each year (CDC, 2007). Although the rate of diagnosis among Black children has decreased in recent years, this population is still disproportionately affected: over 65% of the total pediatric diagnoses from 2006 to 2009 were among Blacks (CDC, 2011).

AIDS diagnosis trends in the 50 US states, the District of Columbia, and the five US-dependent areas show that increasingly more children who were perinatally infected with HIV are reaching adolescence and adulthood before becoming diagnosed with AIDS, which may be an indication of successful treatment and care. As of December 31, 2008, an estimated 4,925 persons who were perinatally infected were living with an AIDS diagnosis in the U.S., with Blacks making up the largest percentage. The rate of perinatally infected persons living with AIDS in Virginia was 7.9 cases per 100,000, slightly lower than the national average of 9.1 per 100,000 population (CDC, 2011).

IN VIRGINIA

Between 2005 and 2009, there were 22 perinatal HIV diagnoses in Virginia; seven of these children

were born during this time period while the other 15 were born between 1991 and 2004. Sixteen out of the 22 diagnosed cases were born in the United States but there is insufficient data on the country of origin for these children's mothers.

The *Code of Virginia* states that HIV screening is recommended for all pregnant women and that HIV testing should be included in the routine prenatal tests unless the woman declines (*Code of Virginia*, 2004). Virginia has been tracking pediatric cases of HIV since July 1989. From the beginning of the epidemic through 2009, Virginia has had 205 pediatric AIDS diagnoses.

REFERENCES

CDC (2011). Pediatric HIV Surveillance [PowerPoint slides]. Accessed November 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/pediatric/index.htm>

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